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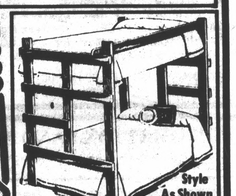

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FOR YOUR FAMILY ROOM

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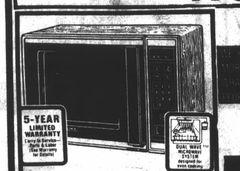

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TIMES-VIRGINIAN

A LIVELY WEEKLY NEWSPAPER AT HISTORIC A

Single-Copy Price: 25 Cents

Volume 92 - Number 51 | Deadline: 2 p.m. Monday | Appomattox, (Va.) - Times-Virginian - December 21, 1983 | 352-8215 | Two Sections - 22 Pages

Local merchant recalls

Gift-giving different than in early 1900s

By FRANCES ABBITT

"Tis the week before Christmas and all over the town, people are busy, hurrying around...

And it's visions of Cabbage Patch Dolls, home computers, Big Foot Trucks and designer jeans that fill the minds of children rathen than sugar plums as the familiar Christmas poem reads.

A lot of the more popular items are hard to find or in some instances impossible to get.

"We haven't had any Cabbage Patch Dolls to sell," commented Rodney Marston, manager of Pope's Family Center in the Triangle Plaza Shopping Center. "However, we have had some as part of a give-away promotion," he added.

"Smurf toys and accessories have been among the most popular items," Marston added. "Remote control toys are big this year too."

Shopping for Christmas was a lot simpler back in 1915 and a lot cheaper too, according to Mrs. Mary Inge, 86, who in 1915 began working for her uncle, L. E. Smith in his Main Street store here in Appomattox. Her monthly salary was $25.00

"A lot of the people didn't shop until just before Christmas, some even waited until Christmas Eve, or even Christmas Eve night; we often stayed at the store until 11 p.m. on Christmas Eve. As long as anybody came, we stayed," she said.

"I just don't know why the Cabbage Patch dolls are so popular," said Mrs. Inge with a smile. "I don't even think they are pretty. Now, when I was working back in Uncle Len's store and when my husband, Allison and I had our store (Inge's Department Store on Main Street) dolls were pretty."

"The most expensive dolls back in 1915 and a for a few years after that were dolls with china heads and bodies made of kid (leather). They sold for $2 or $3 depending on the size. Not many people could afford dolls that expensive then," Mrs. Inge said.

The most popular dolls were those with china heads and bodies filled with excelsior. These sold for and average of 98 cents.

According to Mrs. Inge, a five dollar bill would buy gifts for one child, but she added, "that five dollar bill was harder to come by back then than a hundred dollars is today."

Mrs. Inge, who began her career in retail sales with her uncle, continued in this line of work with her husband until their retirement in 1947.

"You know," she added, "I never go in a store that I don't have the urge to get behind that counter and get busy".

remembering her days as sales clerk as if they were yesterday, Mrs. Inge said, "Trains that wound up with a key were a popular Christmas item. They sold for about $1.50 in 1917. And spinning tops were very popular."

Along with a variety of Jack-In-The-Boxes, a stopper gun was high on the "want list" of boys back in 1915 and "if you weren't careful you could get a bruise from those things," she said with a laugh.

"I remember doll cradles made from wood," Mrs. Inge said. "They would make any little girl happy."

For the young lady on your list back in 1915 a Dresser Set was a really nice gift, according to Mrs. Inge."Only special people got those," she said with a smile.

"Toy pianos were popular at Christmas too," Mrs. Inge said. "They were about the size of a shoe box and sold for $1.00"

"When we had our store, we bought a lot of our goods from Quinn-Marshall in Lynchburg," she said. "And a lot of out toys were shipped from New York. We would order from a catalog. One company with whom we did business would come to Richmond during the summer months with a display. We would go down and make our selection of the items we would offer for Christmas."

Clothing was a popular gift item for adults back in 1915. For the farmer N & W bib overalls sold for $1.98 and a good pair of shoes for $2.98.

Mrs. Inge, who has a memory bank filled with interesting information about the retail business she likes nothing better than to talk about her experiences in the retail business with her friends.

And, what does she think is the greatest difference about shopping then and now? Lots of things. "Especially the manner in which Christmas merchandise is displayed early in the fall, even before Halloween," she commented.

You know, at Uncle Len's store, we didn't even put out the toys until the second week in December. Today, nearly everybody is finished shopping by then," she said with a laugh.

"The prices today are unbelievable. I just don't see how folks make it!"

Mrs. Mary Inge

Season's greetings from the staffs of the Times-Virginian newspaper and Atlantic Publications

Area holiday closings noted

Appomattox County and Town offices will be closed for the Christmas holiday and have announced the following schedule for the coming holiday.

The Appomattox County Commissioner of Revenue Office will be closed Friday, Dec. 23 and closed all day Monday in observance of Christmas.

The office of Appomattox Treasurer will be closed all day Friday, Dec. 23 and Monday, Dec. 26 in observance of the holiday.

The Office of Building Inspector will close at noon on Friday, Dec. 23 and will be closed Monday, Dec. 26.

The County Clerk's Office will close at noon Friday, Dec. 23 and will be closed Monday, Dec. 26.

Area banks, Central Fidelity, The Farmers National Bank, American Federal Savings and Loan Association and the Pamplin Branch of the First National Bank in Farmville will be closed Monday for the Christmas holiday.

The Office of Division of Motor Vehicles, driving permit division, will close Friday, Dec. 23 at noon.

The Appomattox Town Office will close at noon Friday, Dec. 23 and will be closed Monday, Dec. 26.

The Appomattox Post Office will be closed on Monday, Dec. 26 in observance of the Christmas holiday and closed on January 2 in observance of New Year's holiday.

Regular rural delivery service and lock box service on Dec. 24 and Dec. 31.

The Times-Virginian newspaper will be closed on Monday, Dec. 26 in observance of Christmas. The Times-Virginian will be published Wednesday afternoon of next week rather than Tuesday.

Beware of winter!

Even though snow has not come on the winter scene in Appomattox as yet, the time is right and the possibility of a snowstorm lurks just around the corner. Caution is the word to remember when driving in the snow or clearing walks or driveways.

W. R. Britton, Emergency Services Coordinator for Appomattox County, has provided information regarding winter storms and some precautions thay may be taken to avoid problems.

The terms WATCH and WARNING are used for winter snow storms as well as other natural hazards.

The WATCH alerts the public that a storm has formed and is approaching the area. Individuals in the alerted areas should keep listening to the latest advisories over the radio and television and begin to take precautionary measures.

A WARNING means that a storm is imminent and immediate action should be taken to protect life and property.

A few winter storm tips follow that will make for greater safety and comfort.

GET INDEPENDENT...Check battery powered equipment, heating fuel, food and other supplies. Areas may be without electricity for long periods of time.

DRESS FOR WINTER WEATHER...Layers of protective clothing keep one warmer than a single layer of clothing. Cover the mouth when going outside in order to protect the lungs from extremely cold air.

TAKE WINTER DRIVING SERIOUSLY...Keep your car 'winterized' Always carry a winter car kit containing equipment to help you keep warm, visible and alive if you are trapped in a winter snow storm. If you should be trapped in a blizzard, avoid over exertion and exposure. Stay in your vehicle, but keep it ventilated. Turn on your dome light at night.

WINTER WORDS OF WARNING: ICE STORMS, FREEZING RAIN, FREEZING DRIZZLE....means that a coating of ice is expected. HEAVY means that the weight of the ice will cause extra damage. SNOW means a steady fall unless occasional or intermittent is used. HEAVY SNOW means a fall of four to six inches is expected within the next twelve hours or six or more inches within the next 24r hours. HEAVY SNOW can mean two or three inches of snow where winter storms are infrequent.

SNOW FLURRIES... means intermittent snowfall that may reduce visibility.

SNOW SQUALLS are brief, intense, falls of snow accompanied by gusty winds.

Even ths most careful drivers will find themselves in trouble when atempting to drive on snow or ice. The best advice is to stay inside unless it is absolutely necessary to drive.

Is Santa Claus a nice guy or a sneaky spy?

Is Santa Claus coming to town? Are children waiting for him? How does the fantasy of Christmas with its story of Santa affect children?

"Probably only positively, unless the ideas are over emphasized or used in a negative way by those working with young children," said Cosby Steel Rogers, assistant professor of family and child development at Virginia Tech.

Whereas many two-year olds are afraid of Santa, young children, from about age three, enjoy the story of Santa Claus. Four-year olds really believe in Santa and are interested in the details. At five children think of him as a real man in a real place will want to write a letter.

"Soon children wonder about some of the parts of the Santa Claus story such as 'how does he get down the chimney?' When they are just beginning to detect incongruities, they are not ready to give up the idea of Santa as real.

Incongruities may be detected by six or seven year olds. For example, How can he travel over all the world in one night? How could he have enough toys? How can he be in the parade and the photo booth at the same time?

"At about seven or eight years, they usually get the word about Santa Claus from older friends at school," said Mrs. Rogers.

"Their acceptance of Santa as a myth may be a slow process. "Don't force them to give it up until they're ready," she said.

Once children themselves bring up questions about Santa Claus, it is easy for the parents to talk about Santa by just putting the questions back to the children to examine how much they believe. Ask them what they think then discuss what they say.

"When the child asks how Santa gets down the chimney, just ask 'How do you think he gets down the chimney?' said Mrs. Rogers, and then let the conversation go from there.

Distinguishing between reality and fantasy of Santa Claus usually isn't a serious concern, she said. The use of the Santa Claus myth as a heavy-handed threat is more of a concern.

The hectic holiday season, with its many gatherings of people in the household, is already a stressful time for everyone, including young children.

If, on top of that, someone uses Santa Claus as a threat to make children behave, they can become overly fearful. They can feel that they have no privacy with their every move being watched.

"A better alternative is to focus on the intrinsic acceptance of the children themselves," said Mrs. Rogers who works with Virginia Extension specialists in the University's College of Human Resources.

"Let them know that Santa is bringing them gifts just because they are themselves. They are important just because they exist, not because of some acts they may or may not do."

It is often just a matter of degree, Mrs. Rogers said. It is only when the threatening aspect of Santa Claus is over done that the children could be uncomfortaole.

Mostly in society, the myth of Santa Claus is enjoyed by everyone, young and old, as a part of the holiday celebration.

YOUNG TERI SHELTON looks in awe at Santa Claus in Carson's Store at Concord. (Photo by Jeff Spitzer)

Father Darkleaf

By CALVIN ROBINSON

White Christmas? We will soon know. According to my weather record, which I make about 7 a.m. on my back porch, back in 1980, Christmas was clear and calm, with the morning temperature forty-four. Christmas Day arrived in 1980 to a cool twelve degrees, clear skies. Last year was very mild, a Christmas morning temperature of fifty-two. This Monday a.m. I had a brisk twenty-five, and had to do a lot of frost removal from the car windshield and windows. White Christmas or not, may you be in the pink of health, have plenty of the long green, stay clear of the blues and hitch your fortune to the golden yellow star of hope.

• • •

Despite another birthday on the 21st, I view it all with a small boy's eye of wonder. Like when I saw my first merry-go-round. And I am reading a very serious book on Philosophy, and it says that Philosophy is the offspring of Wonder. We see things, experience things, and then try to figure them out. Our world needs this Christmas. More than a Pause that Refreshes, may it be a Pause that Inspires and spurs Dedication.

• • •

The holiday season usually brings a lot of former residents and visitors to the area. Welcome.

• • •

Last minute gift suggestion. A subscription to the county newspaper.

• • •

Nice feeling. To come home and find a large basket or box of fruit at the front door.

• • •

You are lucky if you find a piece of money. I found an Indianhead penny in a drawer of my desk.

• • •

So-o-o-o, the New York Yankees get a new manager for next season. Yogi, the Berra.

• • •

Lots of work spent decorating Christmas trees, but the reward is worth it. One of the best was the one at Maude's Restaurant. Nearly every home has a Christmas wreath in the window. My "tree" is seventeen inches tall. Two Red Cardinals are special customers at my windowside bird feeder. Please remember the birds, especially if we have a White Christmas.

• • •

News item: Reportedly 75,000 Christmas cards went out from The White House. Any to Appomattox County?

• • •

Season's greetings to our fine town, county and state employees. That includes teachers, volunteer firemen and rescue squad personnel. And all those who in stores, banks, offices, friends, and neighbors who helped make 1983 "a very good year."

• • •

There have already been too many accidents, highway deaths, fires. You must help make ours a safer world. Thanks for reading, and Merry Christmas everyone.

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Appomattox County's J.B. Drinkard has been named to the board of directors of Lynchburg General Hospital. See story, page 14.

The Woodmen of the World honored local citizens at their annual awards banquet earlier this month, for a story and photo coverage, see page 6.

Food for needy veterans

DENNIS GRAGG (left) and Bill Neathawk, of Appomattox American Legion Post 104, were busy this week distributing food baskets to needy veterans and their families for the holiday season. The food baskets were purchased with funds collected by the American Legion through their various fund-raising activities.